

Corporate Governance and the Quality of Service Delivery in Local Authorities: Case of Masvingo Municipality

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Abstract: It is arguably true that local authorities are expected to play a pivotal role in improving the economy of any nation in general and the standard of living for the citizens. However, governance challenges have been reported as one of the causes of poor performance and lack of sustainability in institutions. In recent years, local authorities have been experiencing poor governance, deplorable service delivery, misuse of public funds and failure to comply with laws. Upon realising that the quality of life of the urban residents in any country is to some extent related to the quality of service delivery by the local municipality of that city, the researchers felt primed to explore corporate governance (CG) issues. The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo city. In probing the problem at hand, the study adopted a mixed methodology to generate data from a sample size of 70 research participants drawn from Masvingo Municipality. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to collect data from municipality employees, the Town Clerk, auditor, Councilors and residents of Masvingo city. The study revealed that CG impacts the quality of service delivery both positively and negatively. It was noted that failure to uphold the elements of CG could translate to poor service delivery while religious implementation of the elements of CG could create a conducive environment for achieving enhanced quality service delivery. Challenges such as nepotism, corruption, political interference and lack of financial resources were identified as rampant in Masvingo city. Measures to improve the quality of service delivery were suggested, namely, employees to be trained to improve their professional competence; nepotism, political interference and corruption be shunned to encourage good CG. It was also recommended that an all-stakeholder approach be put in place so that the elements of CG are taken into consideration for the sake of improving the quality of service delivery in Masvingo city.

Key Terms: Corporate Governance (CG), Service Delivery

I. INTRODUCTION

Local authorities play an important role in improving the economy of the nation and the standard of living of the citizens (Eke, Emenike, Stephen, Gembu, Ogbette, & Samuel, 2018). According to Sifile, Mabvure, Manuere and Morris (2018), local authorities provide diverse services to both the private and the public corporates thereby providing a platform upon which other activities can ride and grow such as infrastructure development, water and sanitation, physical and

land use planning. However, governance challenges have been reported as one of the causes of poor performance and lack of sustainability in institutions such as parastatals, the private sector and local municipalities (Schoute, Budding & Gradus, 2018). In recent years, local authorities have been criticized for poor governance, poor service delivery, misuse of public funds and failure to comply with laws (Jephias & Tendai, 2020). It can be argued that the quality of life of any urban population is to some extent related to the quality of the service delivery by the local municipality of that city. It is against such a background that establishing the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Zimbabwe municipalities can be viewed as a worthwhile exercise.

1.1 Background to the study

In the last two decades, the accountability of government institutions has become more complex and it attracted considerable interests from both academic researchers and the general public (Krah & Martens, 2020). Issues such as financial scandals and mismanagement of resources have concerned stakeholders, since government institutions are regarded as agents of the public with a duty of ensuring the proper functioning of governmental organizations (Bett & Tibbs, 2017). The activities of government institutions are therefore scrutinized by numerous actors and stakeholders (Beshi & Kaur, 2019). Consequently, many governments across the globe are giving serious attention to the issues of governance such as accountability, and transparency of its agencies in response to the pressure from the citizens to enhance service delivery (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021). However, lack of enforcement or rigorous punishment for violations make public organizations and local authorities suffer from low levels of efficiency, corruption and many other problems (Keping, 2018).

Basria and Nabihab (2014) carried out a research in which they highlighted that in 39 cities in Indonesia, examining public satisfaction with local governments and service delivery, most of the respondent's expressed disappointment with their local government's lack of commitment to eradicate corruption and report practices of corruption, collusion and nepotism. In the report Foresight Africa Mbaku (2020) asserts

that African countries continue to build on the governance gains that they have achieved since the early 1990s. Since then, many African countries have undertaken institutional reforms that have significantly changed their governance architectures and put in place a new set of leaders (Mbaku, 2020). However, Africa has a long way to go since too many countries have not yet achieved the type of reforms that can enhance good governance and prevent corruption, and economic decline (Mbaku, 2020) and (Ndevu & Muller, 2018). The absence of good governance in many African countries has been extremely damaging to the government's corrective intervention role, particularly in the maintenance of peace and security, as well as the promotion of economic growth and the creation of the wealth needed to confront poverty and improve human development (Mbaku, 2020).

In a research conducted by Ndevu and Muller (2018), it was noted that there are great discrepancies between the municipalities across South Africa. The Overview Report on the State of Local Government in South Africa, issued by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), highlighted that dysfunctionality and instability within municipalities create opportunities for fraud and corruption to take place (Masegare, 2016). This led to the implementation of the newly formed Local Government Turnaround Strategy (Masegare, 2016). The COGTA report identified several deficiencies within the current structures and institutional systems of municipalities and, as such, identified the need for the review of appropriate procedures and practices to implement critical changes within local municipalities (Masegare, 2016). The Auditor General (AG) in South Africa further pointed out to the leadership in these municipalities to re-emphasise the benefits of good governance at all municipalities as a key mechanism to create a fertile environment for appropriate service delivery and to back this up with decisive action in setting the appropriate tone at the top, investing in the right skills and competencies for key positions and further continuing good record-keeping practices in all municipalities (Ndevu & Muller, 2018).

CG issues are topical issues both in the private and the public sector in Zimbabwe (Sifile, Tekwa, Chavunduka, Mabvure & Faitira, 2018). This study primarily focused on the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo city. Many empirical studies have been conducted over the last two decades to ascertain the relationship between CG and a firm's performance in the world. However, the outlined studies focused on the general situation in many cities and indications are that none of them specifically explored how CG dynamics influenced the quality of service delivery in Masvingo city of Zimbabwe. Cities in different countries have been grappling with the quest for quality service delivery and it can safely be argued that the issue has not been brought to finality since queries are still rife. Thus, this research managed to come up with solutions to improve service delivery and the role of good CG in promoting quality service delivery for healthy communities in municipalities. This implies that the role of the

study is to scrutinize and ascertain the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo urban of Zimbabwe. However, similar studies in the context of Zimbabwean Masvingo local authority have never been done. Hence, this study examined the contribution of CG to the quality of service delivery in Zimbabwean local authorities the case study of Masvingo city. According to Mapuva and Takabika (2020), the Zimbabwean local governance regime can be traced back to the colonial days where a plethora of pieces of legislations existed, making it cumbersome to deliver services to the populace. Of note was the Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15] which provided the basis for all local government operations and attendant institutions both before and after independence. Community participation was limited as most decision-making processes emanated from the Centre (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). Before independence, there existed a dual system of local governance which comprised rural council serving the predominately white commercial farming areas and district council serving the predominantly black communal areas (Sifile et al, 2018). During the colonial era, local government was racially organised. Urban councils were responsible for managing urban areas inhabited mostly by whites and rural councils administered only those parts of rural areas which were occupied also by whites (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). In 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a system of local government in which local authorities enjoyed a mixture of delegated and devolved functions and powers (Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019). Local authorities were merely creatures of the national government and without constitutional recognition (Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019). This changed when the new Constitution of Zimbabwe was adopted in 2013, and, among other things, provides for a multilevel system of government (Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019). There are several sections of the Constitution of Zimbabwe that seek to promote democratic governance in local governance in Zimbabwe. These include Section 5; Section 264; Section 274 and Section 301. Section 5 of the Constitution establishes the three tiers of Government with each tier having well-defined powers and functions (Jephias & Tendai, 2020). Section 264 sets the principles of devolution to local authorities and the modalities of how provinces will function under a devolved arrangement. Section 274 prescribes how urban local authorities will function and operate while Section 301 provides for fiscal transfers (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). Of the various constitutional provisions, Section 264 has been one of the much-talked about because most provinces are excited about managing their own affairs, most importantly how they will utilize available resources within their areas of jurisdiction for the benefit of their communities (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020).

The 2013 Constitution organizes government at the national, provincial and local levels. Provincial and metropolitan councils make up the provincial tier while the local tier of government is constituted by urban and rural local authorities (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). Urban local authorities are established to manage and represent the affairs of people

living in urban areas, whereas rural local authorities govern rural areas (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). The Constitution permits the establishment of different classes of urban and rural local authorities. This system is designed to result in asymmetric decentralization (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). This constitutional provision is an acknowledgement of the differences between rural and urban areas and the local authorities (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). The new Constitution requires devolution of powers, responsibilities and resources to these local authorities to attain a variety of objectives linked to development, democracy and peace. The Constitution further grants local authorities the right to govern their respective communities with little involvement of the national government. Thus, the new Constitution has elevated the status of local government (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). The principles that are set in the 2013 constitution regulates both the ways in which local authorities carry out their activities as well as the outcome of those activities. For instance, the duty to ensure good governance is an outcome while that of cooperating with one another is a means to an end the end being effective multilevel governance (Chigwata & Visser, 2018).

However, Jephias and Tendai (2020) argue that despite coming up with a new constitution there remains limited progress in implementing relevant provisions of the Constitution particularly the core ideals of devolution which remain contentious suggesting the need for an implementation framework and plan. Such a framework would guide reforms of relevant administrative structures and relations. Chigwata and Visser (2018) further argue that the autonomy which this Constitution affords to local government is however unknown and unexplored, especially from a constitutional law point of view. Ndevu and Muller (2018) highlighted the importance of local authorities, given that local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, it has an important social function in providing basic services to the community. Mbaku (2020) asserts that local government is at the coalface of public service delivery. This view is also articulated by Ndevu and Muller (2018), who state that the local government is often the first point of contact between an individual and a government institution. The local sphere is often referred to as grass-roots government because of its direct association with communities at a local level (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). Despite the importance of such organizations in Zimbabwe they have been performing beyond and below expectation due to financial challenges and general weakness arising from weak CG enforcement mechanisms (Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Municipalities in Zimbabwe are experiencing ineffective and inefficient CG and eventually translating to poor service delivery (Marumahoko, Afolabi & Sadie, 2020). The Auditor General's report on local authorities in Zimbabwe, revealed that out of the 59 issues reported, 34 relate to the area of governance while 25 relate to revenue collection, employment

costs, procurement and service delivery (Chiri, 2019). Governance issues reported in the same year were in respect of councils operating without key policy documents, failure to review and approve payroll prior to processing, absence of control over contracted out services, improper management of Council assets, development of and without approval of the responsible Minister and other issues on ineffective internal control systems (Chiri, 2019). Research by Morris et al (2018) outline that poor governance of local authorities affects the service delivery in the municipalities. Marumahoko et al (2018) further agree that despite many strategies or policies initiated over the years, the admirable local government system inherited from the colonial period has deteriorated significantly. Stories pertaining to the city of Masvingo have been published in both print and electronic media as the municipality was castigated for ineffective communication between the council and rate payers and unfair rate hikes (Saharo, 2021). Moreover, the city of Masvingo has been criticized for misuse of public funds and ineffective service delivery confirmed by inadequate water supply, sewer spillages and poor fuel management as well as vehicle ownership wrangles (Chiri, 2019). Ineffective governance and service delivery can affect the government, employees, local authorities and residents. Some of the strategies that have been implemented to address these challenges and proved fruitless include local government reforms, residents' involvement, curbing corruption and strengthening intergovernmental synchronization as well as the devolution of services and functions to local government (Marumahoko et al, 2020). In light of this backdrop, the research sought to explore the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo urban of Zimbabwe.

1.3 Main research objective

To establish the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo Municipality of Zimbabwe.

1.3.1 Sub-Objectives

- To establish the current CG framework employed by Masvingo Municipality.
- To establish the role played by the community in connection with CG and service delivery in Masvingo Municipality.
- To examine the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo Municipality.
- To identify challenges being faced by Masvingo Municipality in promoting good cooperate governance practices.
- To generate recommendations on how CG can improve the quality-of service delivery in municipalities.

1.4 Major Research question

What is the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo Municipality in Zimbabwe?

1.41 Research Sub-Questions

- What is the current CG framework employed by Masvingo Municipality?
- What is the role of the community in connection with CG and service delivery in Masvingo Municipality?
- What is the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Masvingo Municipality?
- What are the challenges being faced by Masvingo Municipality in promoting good CG practices?
- What measures can be put in place by Masvingo Municipality to improve CG and quality service delivery?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The main research variables

2.1.1 Corporate Governance

According to Keping (2018), CG refers to the way in which companies are governed and to what purpose. It identifies who has power and accountability, and who makes decisions. It is, in essence, a toolkit that enables management and the board to deal more effectively with the challenges of running a company. CG ensures that businesses have appropriate decision-making processes and controls in place so that the interests of all stakeholders such as shareholders, employees, suppliers, customers and the community, are balanced (Keping, 2018). Governance at a corporate level includes the processes through which a company's objectives are set and pursued in the context of the social, regulatory and market environment (Castrillón, 2021). CG is concerned with practices and procedures for trying to make sure that a company is run in such a way that it achieves its objectives, while ensuring that stakeholders can have confidence that their trust in that company is well founded (Mehraj, 2018). In governance there must be interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say (Saito, 2021). Fundamentally, it is about power, relationships and accountability, who has influence, who decides, and how decision-makers are held accountable (Mbaku, 2020). Eke et al (2018) and Mehraj (2018) agree to the notion that in governance, citizens are rightly concerned with a governments' responsiveness to their needs and protection of their rights. In general, governance issues pertain to the ability of government to develop an efficient, effective, and accountable public management process that is open to citizen participation and that strengthens rather than weakens a democratic system of government (Mehraj, 2018). However CG issues in many public institutions in Africa have been at stake due to nepotism, politics, corruption and mismanagement (Chigwata & Visser, 2018).

2.1.2 Quality service delivery

Dube (2019) asserts that quality services is dealing with customers in a respectful and helpful manner. According to

Kessy (2020) service quality can be defined as the difference between customer's expectations for the service encounter and the perceptions of the service received. According to Chigwata and Visser (2018) the term quality service delivery is used to describe the distribution of basic resources citizens depend on like water, electricity, sanitation, infrastructure, land and housing. Service delivery is considered a democratic right of the people. Local authorities around the world are obligated to provide and cater to the needs of the community (Eke et al, 2018). Service delivery is the local authorities' key task. According to Schoute et al (2018) service delivery is part of a complex of relations between citizens and governments, it involves a series of products and services of a varying nature in which the customer comes first. Service delivery can be regarded as a tool used by local authorities to meet requirements of the people residing in the area (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020). In their study, Eke et al (2018) pointed out that Nigeria, as a developing country, has issues such as poor and inadequate infrastructure, inefficient and ineffective service delivery, corruption, and high levels of poverty and misery. The continued existence of these problems in Nigeria is due largely to bad governance. Scholars such as Mapuva and Takabika (2020) and Masegare (2016) unanimously agree on the challenges of quality service delivery of local authorities the world over. Ndevu & Muller (2018) in their research noted that the lack of public confidence in the local government system can lead to service delivery protests. Castrillón (2021) argues that the key problems that contribute to the poor customer service culture are unhelpfulness, slow to deliver and rudeness. For that, a consensus has to be reached among leaders in political, public and private sectors with an objective of establishing a rapid and sustained improvement in the quality of services.

2.2 Service delivery principles

Local government service quality delivery principles according to Zondi, Nzimakwe & Mbili (2017) include accessibility of services, Affordability of services, Quality of products and services, Accountability for services, Integrated Development of services and Sustainability of services. These principles enable employees to be more effective and transparent in providing high, quality services. Achieving the mentioned variables entails quality service delivery in local authorities.

i) Accessibility of Services

Councillors, through their governing function, should strive to ensure that all citizens have access to at least the minimum level of basic services. Where imbalances in access to services are identified, these should be addressed thoroughly. This may occur by means of the development of a new infrastructure or the rehabilitation and upgrading of an existing infrastructure, or a combination of both (Zondi et al, 2017).

ii) *Affordability of Services*

Services offered by the local authority must be affordable this can be achieved by setting tariffs which balance the economic viability of continued service provision and the ability of the poor to access such services; and determining appropriate service levels.

iii) *Quality of products and services*

The quality of services provided by local authorities may be difficult to define. However, must suit the following criteria, suitability of purpose, timeframes, convenience, safety and continuity, responsiveness to service-users; and a professional and respectful relationship between service-providers and service-users.

iv) *Accountability for Services*

While there may be several service delivery mechanisms or options available to municipalities, accountability for such services delivered or not delivered remains the ultimate responsibility of the municipal council.

v) *Integrated Development of Services*

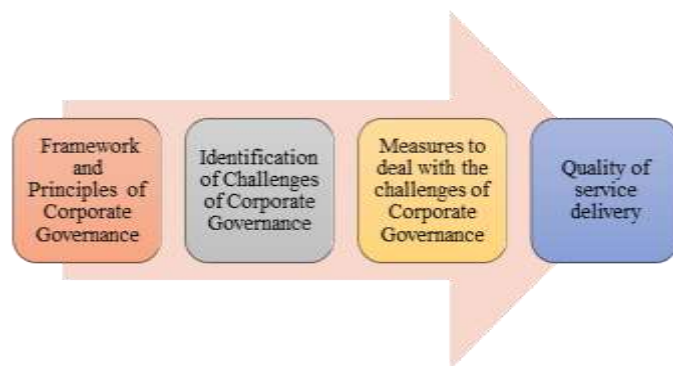
In terms of this principle, municipalities should adopt an integrated approach to planning and ensure the provision of adequate municipal services. This implies that the economic and social impact of service provision in relation to municipal policy objectives such as poverty eradication, spatial integration and job creation through public works programs (Zondi et al, 2017).

vi) *Sustainability of Services*

On-going service provision depends on, inter alia, financial and institutional systems which support sustainability (Zondi et al, 2017). Sustainability includes both financial and environmental viability with a sound and socially just use of resources. In their compilation and execution of their developmental plans, municipalities must ensure that the services planned are sustainable, economically viable, and do not disrupt environmental and social systems in place.

2.3 *Conceptual framework*

Figure 2.1 CG variables and their tentative impact on service delivery.



(Source: Current author, 2021)

In the current study, it was conceptually assumed that once the framework and principles of CG are in place, good CG practices would become a reality as illustrated in Figure 2.1. Some principles of good CG include transparency, accountability, fairness, and citizenship participation, rule of law, integrity and fairness. After all steps are taken, the probability of having quality service delivery would be significantly high.

2.4 *Principles of good CG*

Good governance is the process of implementing a nationwide governing plan based on the interests and priorities of the people, with the goal of achieving a just society based on the ideals of inclusion, liberty, equality, and cooperation (Eke et al, 2018). As Bett & Tibbs (2017) put it, good governance is all about the government's ability to fulfil its end of the social contract, citizen empowerment through information availability, and allowing for increased citizen participation in choices that affect them. Principles of good governance emphasizes efficient and effective government to promote a nation's and its residents' rapid development. Implementing principles of good cooperate governance guarantees maximum citizen participation, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law (Eke et al, 2018). An evaluation of best practices of CG is necessary to hypothesize that CG is critical to good service delivery (Mbecke, 2014). He further claims that while attempts to instil governance principles in local authorities is frequently met with political resistance. Harnessing principles of CG can help in improving the relationship between administrative and political leadership. CG principles are guided by ideals of public life such as selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, transparency, honesty, and leadership, citizen engagement, the rule of law (CIPFA, 2016). These principles are based on the Cadbury Report, a model and reference to CG in the United Kingdom (Cadbury, 1992). Considering the core principles of good governance in combination with best practices can thus enable good governance in local governments and improve service delivery (Mbecke, 2014). Employees can be more effective and transparent in providing high-quality services by following good governance concepts such as participation, rule of law, openness, accountability, fairness, and efficiency (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021). CIPFA (2016) argue that the principles of good governance on their own does not define the organisation's aims or policies, and they do not address whether a policy decision turns out to be correct. Good governance is concerned with how decisions are made, with particular attention paid to issues such as goal knowledge and clarity, the integrity, fairness, and transparency of individual and team decisions, and the effectiveness of controls and accountability procedures.

2.4.1 *Transparency*

Transparency, according to Eke et al (2018), involves openness and respect to due processes. He further highlights that transparency, guarantees that information is easily

available and can be used to assess the authority's performance and prevent any potential abuse of power. To ensure that all interested parties have faith in the organization, transparency is necessary. Openness in information disclosure leads to effective and timely action. Transparency, according to Beshi & Kaur (2019), indicates that public officials should be as open as possible and provide reasons for their decisions and actions. They should only restrict information when it is not in the public interest. Dube (2019) claims that local governments, particularly in Africa, are not transparent enough, which has resulted in a slew of problems such as corruption, nepotism and mis-use of public funds.

2.4.2 Accountability

Accountability is the responsibility to account for stewardship to an authority or the people (Castrillón, 2021). In a similar manner, Kraha & Martens (2020) highlights that accountability has two major meanings which overlap. Firstly, there is the standard meaning common in democracies that those who exercise power, whether as government, as elected representatives or as appointed officials, are in a sense steward and must be able to show that they exercised their powers and discharged their duties properly. Secondly, accountability may refer to conformity between the values of the delegating body and the person or persons to whom powers, and responsibilities are delegated. Accountability means that councillors and public servants are responsible for their decisions and actions and are available for external review (Beshi & Kaur, 2019). The essence of accountability is an obligation to present an account of and to answer for the execution of responsibilities, to those who entrusted those responsibilities to the public servants and politicians. The roles and responsibilities of politicians and those of municipal managers should be clarified in a corporate government code and framework for each local government. Eke et al (2018) assert that accountability means that public officers are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Accountability is also an important key requirement of good governance. Jephias and Tendai (2020) argue that accountability applies not just to political institutions, but also to the corporate sector and civil society organizations, who must be accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.

2.4.3 Citizen Participation

This refers to citizens' participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies that impact them. It entails a two-way communication channel between the government and the people who are ruled (Mbecke, 2014).

2.4.4 Selflessness

Means that public officers should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest not personal financial gain or other material benefits.

2.4.5 Integrity

Implies that public officers should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

2.4.6 Objectivity

In carrying out public business, such as making public appointments, issuing contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, public officers should make decisions based on merit (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021).

2.4.7 Honesty

Means that public officers should declare any private interests relating to their duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising to protect the public interest.

2.4.8 Leadership

Means that public officers should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2.4.9 Rule of law

Fair legislative frameworks that are applied fairly are required for good governance. It also asks that human rights, particularly those of minorities, be fully protected (Mbaku, 2020).

2.5 Corporate Governance framework for local authorities

The study that was carried by Eke et al, (2018) highlighted that CG framework is a document that provides a broad description of the elements of CG and the process and guidelines that provide assurance that the organization operates effectively and efficiently in fulfilling its vision. Keping (2018) argues that CG applicable to local governments, generally is more complex than in the private sector. Chigwata & Visser (2018) asserts that objectives of local governments are broad with impact on communities whereas private organizations are interested in maximizing profits. According to Mbecke, (2014) the different components of appropriate CG framework can include the following: a) Definition and statement of the corporate municipal governance b) the purpose of corporate municipal governance c) The roles functions and composition of the Council and the municipal manager c) Relationship between Council and the municipal manager d) Corporate Municipal Governance Principles f) Key documents, policies and legislation supporting the corporate municipal governance. The corporate municipal governance framework results from different documents, legislation and policies. Such documents, legislation and policies must be recorded and used as reference in support of the process of corporate municipal governance (Mbecke, 2014). Strategic plans, annual business plans, Integrated development plans, by-laws, municipal structures act, municipal systems act, and the constitution are amongst the documents, policies and legislation important to conserve and refer to in local authority governance (Eke et al, 2018).It

is important for each local government to select, define and explain the CG principles it intends to implement (Mehraj, 2018). Abakose and Abagojam (2021) further define CG as the framework established by Councils to provide the prospect community, ratepayers and other stakeholders with confidence. The organization will be fulfilling its stewardship of the city with due diligence, ethically, transparently and accountably.

CG framework of local authorities in Zimbabwe is guided by Urban Councils, Rural District Councils Act, 2013 Constitution and the public entities CG act (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing has the general oversight role over Local Authorities in terms of policy direction and ensuring that financial management and governance issues are adhered to (Dube, 2019). The Urban Councils Act and Rural District Councils Act assigned a range of responsibilities and powers to urban and rural councils, respectively. These responsibilities ranged from basic municipal services to welfare services, among others (Marumahoko & Madhekeni, 2019). However, Marumahoko & Madhekeni (2019) argued that the 2013 Constitution did not change anything. Given that it affords every local authority 'the right to govern' and 'all' the powers necessary to do so, it requires that local authorities exercise significant powers and enjoy a certain measure of local autonomy. It is suggested that, at a minimum, it means that there are limits to the role of national government in local affairs.

Abakose & Abagojam (2021) in their research stated that the principles of good CG forms the basis of a CG framework. Mapuva & Takabika (2020) criticizes the lack of proper implementation of CG frameworks in Local authorities in Zimbabwe. In his study, Dube (2019) found that the lack of clear operational rules that demarcate between the missions of the many institutions with a role to play in service delivery has an impact on governance. Some local governments in Zimbabwe, recognize that while devolution allows them to engage in economic administration, it is necessary to ensure that the District Development Coordinator's tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined, as well as how they will interact with local governments. This would need to be spelled out explicitly in order to avoid redundancy and unwanted turf conflicts when devolution takes hold. All the above studies did not entail the exact CG framework employed by Masvingo city.

2.6 Challenges faced by local authorities in promoting Corporate Governance

According to Dube (2019) challenges faced by local authorities in promoting CG include:

- Tensions between the political and administrative interface.
- Poor ability of many councillors to deal with the demands of local government in terms of the provision of services.

- Insufficient separation of powers between political parties and the municipality.
- Inadequate accountability measures and support systems and resources for local democracy.
- Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities.
- Lack of knowledge.
- Lack of proper communication strategy between politicians in municipalities with Officials and communities.
- Lack of capacity pertaining to skills and grasping with policy processes.
- Self-enrichment by both politicians and officials.

Eke et al (2018) argue that another important contributory factor is that management capacity is inadequate or irrelevant training of managers, including minimal usage of competency testing methods in the recruitment of managers and non-rotation of senior managers to ensure exposure to all facets of service delivery. Eke et al (2018) further mention human resource management as a challenge, with reference to unmatched staff to customer ratios, mismanagement of disciplinary issues and the general lack of service commitment by officials. Then there is information, referring to the quality, nature, availability and accessibility of information provided in service delivery improvement plans that are generally poor, making it difficult to accurately measure performance (Eke et al, 2018). There is a gap in these studies in that they did not cite the exact challenges faced by Masvingo local authority.

2.7 Challenges faced by local authorities in service delivery

The issue of poor governance in the African public sector has also been well documented in other studies in the field of public management also, considering the fragile nature of governance policies in African public institutions (Dube, 2019). Abakose and Abagojam (2021) pointed out that public service delivery in many African countries is riddled with bureaucracy, corruption, selfishness, and favouritism that tend to benefit the privileged few at the expense of the impoverished many. In Ethiopia, public service delivery faces various challenges including public money wastage, low revenue collections and unmotivated public servants, poor accountability, and generally poor performance on service delivery (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021). The study that was carried by (Dube, 2019) in Zimbabwe establishes that the problems at the local authority level could also have been compounded by lack of complimentary support for infrastructure from central government. Local authorities also have a poor record with respect to revenue collection in general. The average collection capacity for local authorities is about 52%. Uncollected revenues among the local authorities would cover about 35% of their estimated total infrastructure requirements (Dube, 2019). The revenue base for local authorities is also not very diversified. There is generally a high dependence on user fees as the main source of revenues, which is affected by willingness to pay as well as capacity to pay. About 40% of the revenues from the local authorities are

from user fees. The local authorities also rely heavily on property tax, which constitutes about 29% of total revenue (Dube, 2019). According to the results of the World Bank Service Level Benchmarking Surveys (2019), local governments have numerous obstacles in delivering water, solid waste disposal, and sewage treatment. According to the Service Level Benchmarking Coordination Committee (2019), these issues were caused by several variables, including the following.

- Limited revenue inflows.
- Increased demand for services as the population grows.
- Low levels of investment in infrastructure repair by local governments.
- Infrastructure and equipment that is starting to fail
- The impact of hyperinflation and dollarization, which contributed to the demise of some transfer and credit facilities that had previously encouraged local investment.
- Insufficient treatment capacity.
- Inaccurate metering.
- Inadequate policies and vandalism of infrastructure.

Dube (2019) argues that there are several reasons to which the above challenges can be attributed. This includes failure by residents to pay for the services being rendered, resulting in huge debts with little scope of being recovered. The failure to pay is both due to unwillingness and inability. Unwillingness is mainly because local authorities are failing to deliver services; hence ratepayers would also be less motivated to pay for non-existent services. As a result, while ratepayers can still find a way of paying for other services such as communication, electricity and transport, they do not assign much priority to rate payment (Dube, 2019). Inability to pay is mainly due to job losses and general economic hardships (Dube, 2019). Abakose & Abagojam (2021) argue that major setbacks to the poor public service delivery include lack of transparency and community participation, poor accountability, and inadequate skill of the service provider.

2.8 Compliance issues in local authorities

The rule of law is another principle of good governance which entails that rules must be applied in CG. Issues of compliance has been on the raise in local authorities (Eke et al, 2018). The research that was carried by Mujih (2021) on the CG in Oxfordshire County Council noted that the proliferation of public service scandals in the United Kingdom consequently led to insufficient accountability for decisions and procedures on spending by local authorities. The research highlighted that a weak or no checks and balances system was also observed in the management of Country council. Dube (2019) confirms the issues of compliance in local authorities in his study, he highlighted that, interviews with local authorities confirm that the Auditor-General's report in South Africa is a true reflection of what is happening on the ground on issues of compliance. Dube (2019) noted that the failure to submit

audited accounts has generally been attributed to two main challenges. The first challenge is with respect to vacant posts within the finance and accounts departments of the local authorities. Some local authorities have unfilled posts, resulting in failure to adequately prepare the financial statements in a format presentable for audit purposes. The second challenge relates to the capacity to adequately prepare the financial statements to auditable levels. This lack of capacity was attributed to inexperience, as local authorities replaced the experienced staff that left for greener pastures, leaving young and inexperienced graduates without audit experience (Dube, 2019). Finally, Dube (2019) points out adherence to regulatory requirements, indicating that misconceptions and lack of knowledge regarding the regulatory framework of government exist, leading to cumbersome procedures, delays in turnaround time, lengthy decision-making processes that compromises the quality of services in local authorities. Both the studies in compliance issues did not highlight how to address the issues of compliance. Hence the researcher sought to exploit this gap.

2.9 Citizen participation in governance and service delivery

Community participation in governance comprises the application of democratic and social justice principles, in which the community has the capacity to construct the State and bestow powers and authorities on it so that the latter can protect its interests according to its wishes (Eke et al, 2018). The community can withdraw the State's previously conferred powers if it fails to fulfil its agency functions, effectively ending the principle-agent relationship. In their study, Mwankupili and Msilu (2020) found that issues of citizen involvement in public institutions have been on the decline. They went on to say that in a local government system, the people might engage in both direct and indirect democracy and governance. Elections facilitate the formation of grass-root governance, which is responsible for local service planning and monitoring, and the Constitution empowers the people to pick officials, including local government leaders (Mwankupili & Msilu, 2020). Citizens, according to Castrillón (2021), require information in order to make informed decisions; information is a tool that the community uses to assess and determine whether policymakers and service providers are doing their jobs, of providing quality services, and making effective use of public funds. As a result, at this level, in the context of local service delivery, the adage "knowledge is power" holds true (Mwankupili & Msilu, 2020). Local governments are obligated to involve the community in order to improve the quality of services and to respond to the dictates of good governance and accountability when fulfilling exclusive and concurrent service delivery obligations (Eke et al, 2018).

When the community is not included in the planning and implementation processes, quality service delivery suffers (Mbaku, 2020). Governments, civil society organizations, and donors have been increasingly interested in the idea that citizens can hold policymakers and service providers

accountable, allowing the community to contribute to enhanced service delivery quality for decades. Citizens' ability to hold policymakers and service providers accountable is more vivid in what the authors refer to as the Human Development sectors, such as health, education, and social protection, because these sectors involve close interactions between providers and the citizens who use their services, according to Mwangupili and Msilu (2020).

According to Mwangupili & Msilu (2020), the community's role is evolving when it comes to concerns of service delivery. They go on to say that, rather than being passive beneficiaries, communities have increasingly become active makers and shapers of services, using their consumer preferences and citizen rights. According to Saito (2021), CG has shaped the idea that citizens' participation influences better governance and service delivery. According to the research carried by Basria and Nabihab (2014), accountability can be implemented in two ways: a long route, in which citizens influence policymakers, who then influence service delivery through providers, or a short route, in which citizens (individually and collectively) directly influence, participate in, and supervise service delivery by providers. As a result of the analogy position of Mwangupili & Msilu's research (2020), it can be stated that the community plays a significant role in governance and quality service delivery.

2.10 Impact of Corporate Governance on service delivery

Mujih (2021) defines CG in the public service as the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives. Organisations with good CG have the capacity to maintain high-quality services and to deliver improvement. Poor CG contributes to serious service and financial failures (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021). Castrillón (2021) highlights that a review of best practices on CG in local governments is important to hypothesise that CG is key to successful service delivery. Dube (2019) asserts that accountability issues under governance also arise from the issue of control of local authorities by higher levels of government. The lack of harmony or the failure of the local authorities and the Minister to speak from one point of view can be regarded as a governance issue in that it ends up compromising service delivery. Local authorities in Zimbabwe indicated that there are occasions when community groups have in some instances agreed to increased rates to allow for investment projects to gain momentum only for the Ministry to disapprove (Dube, 2019). In 2019, Harare City Council indicated that their budget proposals were rejected by the Minister, even though they had complied with the consultation procedures. Local authorities end up failing to deliver on the promises they had made to residents while soliciting for their support for rates increments, causing further inflation of tension with the residents (Dube, 2019). In as much other research studies debated on the impact of CG on service delivery they did not give detailed information of the extent of the impact.

2.11 Prerequisites for success of CG in local governments

According to Mwangupili & Msilu (2020) the success of corporate municipal governance is dependent on a set of prerequisites or catalysts that are tailored to each local government's scenario. The following are most of the prerequisites:

- The capacity and competency of local government management in terms of skills, competence, and expertise.
- The ability of local governments to function independently of provincial and/or national governments.
- Coordination between various departments or parts of local government, as well as between them and the community, civil society, private, and corporate sectors.
- Cooperation and networking with all existing bodies both inside and outside the local government.
- The local government's ability to provide sufficient funding for service delivery.
- Decision-making tools, such as laws and regulations, as well as organizational structures, are critical to facilitating CG in local governments (Dube, 2019).

2.12 Theoretical framework

According to Sifile et al (2018) a key feature of modern day corporations is separation of ownership and control. Such a separation gives rise to some CG issues. Beginning from 1980's, many theories have been proposed by to explain and address CG problems that arise due to such separation. Some of the important theories are:

- *The Agency Theory/Shareholder Theory*

Most research studies on CG were grounded on the agency theory. It emphasizes separation of ownership from control. According to Sifile et al (2018), agents are managers, principals are the owners and the board acts as the monitoring mechanism. It is assumed if management is not controlled, they will run with profits and resources. The theory assumes management is selfish and reluctant to forward the interest of principals hence they should be controlled and monitored (Sifile et al, 2018).

(i) *Who is the principal* - In the context of corporates, shareholders (principals) define the objectives of the company.

(ii) *Who is the agent* - Board of Directors (BODs) and managers are considered as agents. Shareholders delegate their power to BODs and who in turn delegates it to managers. BODs is accountable to shareholders.

(iii) *Assumptions according to (Bett & Tibbs, 2017)*

- Divergence of interest of shareholders and Board of Directors - Agency theory assumes that the interests of principles and agents diverge, and both seek to promote their own interest.

- Information asymmetry - BODs have a better access to information about entity's position as compared to shareholders.
- BODs have a fiduciary relationship with the shareholders.
- Shareholders are interested in maximizing wealth while managers may succumb to Self-interest and, unless restricted from doing otherwise, would be interested in protecting and enhancing his pay and perks. This conflict of interest leads to Agency Problem where the important issue is how to ensure that agent acts in the best interests of the principal.
- Agency problem results in Agency costs, for example, monitoring costs in large corporations and 'bonding costs'.

(iv) *Other ways to reduce agency cost –*

The shareholders (principal) need to ensure that agents act in the best interest of shareholders and not abuse their power. Some of the ways to reduce Agency cost are:

- Fair and adequate financial disclosures
- Appointment of independent directors.
- Appointment of credible independent auditors.
- Board Committees to check issues like excessive remuneration, appointment of knowledgeable directors, etc.
- Formation of Audit Committees.

(v) *Ownership pattern and agency problem -*

- The way of handling Agency problem depends on the ownership pattern of corporates in each country.
- If ownership structures are dispersed and the investors disagree with the management or are dissatisfied with its performance, they exit, and it may result in reduction in share Prices.
- In countries in which there is concentrated ownership of equity and there are large dominant shareholders, they control the managers and expropriate minority shareholder in order to gain private control benefits.

(vii) *Limitations:*

- The Agency/Shareholder theory puts too much emphasis on shareholders and ignores the interest of other stakeholders.
- It does not have universal application. It has better applicability in US and UK markets and is not suitable for countries which have companies with large family and/ or institutional holdings.
- The theory assumes the employees to be individualistic and of bounded rationality where rewards and punishment are the only things which matter to them (Sifile et al, 2018). It, certainly, is a myopic view of human beings.

- *The Stakeholder Theory*

The stakeholder theory is one of the renowned CG theories as it argues that, organizations do not operate in a vacuum but in the communities and society therefore should be responsible to the stakeholders (Sifile et al, 2018). The theory also postulates that, the organization has various and diverse stakeholders who have interest that should be balanced by the corporation (Sifile et al, 2018). Some of the stakeholders include ratepayers, employees, government, creditors and civic organization. The stakeholder theory is valuable in exploring the importance of CG in service delivery especially in organizations with multiple stakeholders like local authorities (Mapuva & Takabika, 2020).

- *The Performance Prism Theory*

On the service delivery aspect which is essentially performance the performance prism theory will be used. The performance prism framework has five facets, the top and bottom facets and three other facets (Sifile et al, 2018). The facets represent stakeholder satisfaction, stakeholder contribution, strategies, processes and capabilities (Sifile et al, 2018). The most important aspect in the performance prism is what the stakeholders expect from the organization and what the organization expects from the stakeholders. CG issues affect delivery of services to stakeholders (Mehraj, 2018).

2.13 Empirical Evidence

Several research studies were conducted in the field and academia on the role good governance practices would play to enhance the performance of service deliveries in different and socio economic and political contexts. The focus of many researchers has been on identifying the relationships and roles of good governance practices, perception of public users and impact of some good governance initiatives reforms.

Abakose & Abagojam (2021) for instance, conducted the study on the good Governance Practices and Public Service Delivery in Jimma Town, Ethiopia. The main objective of the study was to assess the role of good governance practices in enhancing service delivery in public institutions of Jimma town in Ethiopia. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research design, and a random sampling method was used to select respondents. The study identified that good governance practices are hindered by various factors such as the weak capacity of service providers, corruption, and poor management to effectively deliver public services. The study concluded that there are strong relationships between good governance practice and public basic service delivery. The study recommended that Jimma town administration should ensure all public service providers are aware of good governance principles and an accountability mechanism to hold service providers accountable for poor performance should be put in place. Additionally, Jimma town administration should ensure participation of community/service users/ in public sector planning and budgeting process and capacitate human resources with

appropriate training to enhance knowledge of good governance and make them responsive to the community needs and priorities.

Similarly, Sifile et al (2018) conducted a study on the Impact of CG on Service Delivery in Murewa Rural District Council (MRDC), Zimbabwe. Data was collected through questionnaires administered to MRDC management, staff, District Administrator and the Council Committee while a focus group discussion was held with MRDC staff and the Council chairperson. The study established that CG has an impact on service delivery. The study also established that CG at MRDC is hindered by structural and deliberate factors. Structural factors were policy and national in nature while deliberate factors were administrative and could be solved at local level. The study also noted that, MRDC is doing its best in trying to adhere to best practices in CG regardless of the militating factors. The research recommends that government should adopt a quota system for women Representation in Council. The research also recommended coming up with a deliberate stance in resolving militating factors by coming up with minimum qualifications for councillors and coming up with a Code of CG for Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

Eke et al (2018) carried out a study on the Local Government Administration and Good Governance in Nigeria. The study was an examination of good governance at the local government level in Nigeria. The research methodology was essentially exploratory and therefore, depended on secondary data for the examination of issues of local government administration and good governance. The interest in good governance at this level of government arose out of the continued hue and cry of poor performance of the third tier of government which has attracted many conferences, workshops and dialogues about the future of this level of government. The study explored good governance and found it to contain three essential elements-citizen participation, accountability and transparency. Analysis of institutional, organizational and constitutional measures put in place to ensure good governance at this level of government, using institutional theory suggest that institutional differences-organizational and constitutional led to crises during the implementation of the measures. These crises have drastically reduced the realization of the three concepts of good governance-accountability, transparency and citizen participation. The research recommended that there should be proper harmonization of the activities of various institutions and measures aimed at achieving good governance. The higher tiers of government should provide the legislation, reforms and coordination necessary to cultivate the ethos of good governance at the local government level.

Beshi & Kaur (2019) carried a study on the Public Trust in Local Government: Explaining the Role of Good Governance Practices in Ethiopia. The primary purpose of the study was to examine the role of good governance practices on public trust in local government. In this study, a conceptual model was developed and tested empirically in Ethiopia by selecting

Bahir Dar City Administration. To test the proposed hypotheses, a quantitative methodology was applied through conducting a survey among the public of Bahir Dar City Administration. The city has a total population of 270,662 of which 128,562 are men and 142,100 are women. The data analyses yielded the following results. All independent variables were highly influential in describing the public's level of trust in their local government. In this case, participants who perceived the existence of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness had greater trust in the City Administration than their counterparts. The findings of the study clearly indicated that transparency, accountability and responsiveness play a crucial role in affecting public trust in local government. Thus, in order to regulate its credibility and competitiveness and most importantly to uphold the public trust, the government should play its part in properly managing the demands of its citizens. In conclusion, the research recognizes the important contributions of practices of good governance in restoring public trust in local government. The study recommended that all parties should work together to create a transparent, accountable and responsive local governance.

Another scholar Kessy (2020) conducted a study on transparency in local government finance and service delivery: The case study of Mwanza City and Moshi District Councils in Tanzania. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to examine the extent to which fiscal transparency in local governments in Tanzania is practiced and how this has played a greater role in service delivery. The study used a case study of purposively selected local councils in Tanzania to examine the dynamics of fiscal transparency and service delivery. The findings show that there is little flow of information from higher levels of local governments to the lower levels in relation to resources available and results achieved. The information received from the councils is sometimes opaque or fuzzy in the sense that it does not reveal all about what their leaders do or what important decisions have been made about their councils. The study concludes that the importance of accountability and transparency attached to service delivery in any country is essential for good practice in local governance. Hence, instruments for accountability and transparency at the local levels must be enhanced to enable public institutions and public officials to be responsive to the citizens.

2.14 Research Gap

Research studies on CG are limited to studying what occurs in developed economies or large emerging economies. It seems, therefore, that less developed and emerging economies are very much under-investigated in the literature. Therefore, this research tried to fill this gap by looking at the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery in Zimbabwean local authorities: a case study of Masvingo City. From the above empirical evidence, it can be noted that research studies on the Impact of CG on service delivery in Masvingo city local authority have not been carried hence the researcher sought to fill this gap. Also, there is need of more studies in the subject

matter in order to improve governance and service delivery in public institutions in Africa (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, the researcher adopted a mixed method approach in which the qualitative research approach was paired with descriptive statistics during the data presentation and analysis. The qualitative component enabled the researcher to use the interpretive research paradigm in which subjective reality was established by interacting with or observing the individuals who experienced or are experiencing it (Kufakunesu & Madusise, 2020). Out of the various research designs which are available, the researchers opted to employ the case study. The study concentrated on five suburbs of Masvingo city comprising low, medium and high density areas with an approximate population of 100 000 residents. The study used the purposive sampling method and the simple random sampling method to select 56 residents, seven employees, five councillors, the Town Clerk and the auditor. This gives a total sample size of 70 respondents. Interviews and questionnaires were employed to collect data. Masvingo Municipality employees, councillors and Masvingo city residents completed questionnaires while the Masvingo city Town Clerk and the auditor were interviewed. In addressing ethical considerations, the participation in the study was purely voluntary. Confidentiality and privacy were also observed as ethical principles.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of the study were discussed in conjunction with the subheadings derived from the initially outlined research objectives.

Table I.1: Response Rate

Category of Respondents	Targeted Research Participants	Questionnaire Rate of Response (f)	Rate of Response (%)
Masvingo City Residents	56	56	100
Municipal Employees	8	7	87.5
Municipal Councillors	5	5	100
TOTAL	69	68	98.6

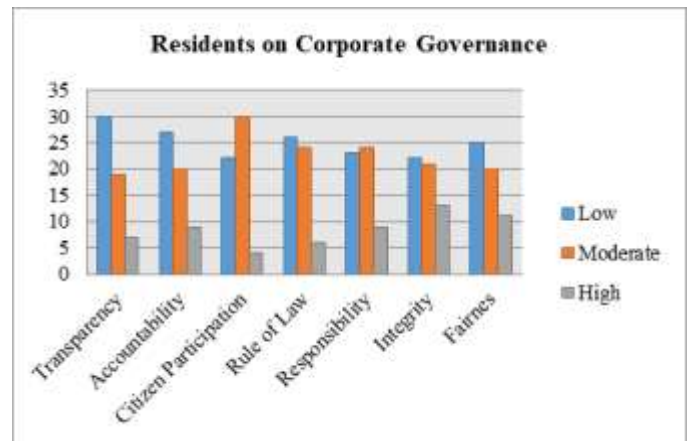
(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

Table 4.1 shows that 98.6% of the distributed questionnaires were returned. The questionnaires distributed to the residents of Masvingo city, and the councillors were all returned while only one questionnaire distributed to a municipality employee was not returned, giving a response rate of 87.5%. The response rate was high mainly because the researchers made deliberate efforts to collect the questionnaires after completion.

4.1 CG framework employed by the city of Masvingo

Masvingo municipal employees and councillors together with the auditor and the Town Clerk claimed that the seven elements of CG existed in Masvingo Municipality and they form the basis of the framework. However, the residents disputed that claim. The same trend occurred when the residents gave their opinions regarding the role of the community in CG and service delivery issues.

Figure I.1: Residents’ views on the Elements of CG Framework.



(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

As portrayed in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, the residents dominantly indicated that the seven elements of CG were lowly considered with consistently few residents claiming that CG was high in Masvingo city. This implies that the residents largely believed that the municipality of Masvingo was not committed to implementing CG framework which it claimed to be adhering to.

Table I.2: Residents’ views on the Aspects of Service Delivery.

Aspects of Service Delivery	Quality of Service delivery					
	Low		Moderate		High	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Water sanitisation	15	27	35	63	6	11
Maintenance of municipal roads and allied transport related infrastructure	38	68	13	23	5	9
Refuse removal	16	29	27	48	13	23
Street lighting	39	70	14	25	3	5
Municipal health care	27	48	24	43	5	9
Primary education	17	30	30	54	9	16
Low-cost housing	29	52	25	45	2	4

(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

The Masvingo municipality employees who took part in the study painted an optimistic view regarding the existence of a

CG framework in the running of Masvingo city. Most of the employees claimed that the fundamental elements of CG, that is, transparency, accountability, and citizenship participation, rule of law, integrity, honesty and fairness, substantially existed in Masvingo municipality practices. The same sentiments were expressed by councillors though they were a bit cautious and conservative in their responses. Moreover, the auditor of Masvingo city together with the Town Clerk jointly insisted that the seven elements of CG were significantly considered by Masvingo municipality.

The research findings above were consistent with the views which were expressed by Mbiku (2020). The views of all the categories of the respondents except the residents suggested that there was the adoption and implementation of the CG practices as established by a study conducted by Keping (2018). Just like the previous studies, the current study established that the maximum participation of the citizens, transparency, accountability and the rule of law were conducive to sound CG practices (Eke et al, 2018). Earlier studies by Mbecke (2014) and Mujih (2021) also established that selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership as well as citizenship participation were vital for good CG.

4.2 The Role of the Community in Connection with CG and Service delivery in Masvingo Municipality

During their separate interview sessions with the current researcher, both the auditor and the Town Clerk of Masvingo city opined that the community was crucial in CG and service delivery. They established that the role of the community in CG is to monitor the local authority in order to enhance quality service deliver, to identify areas of improvement in terms of service delivery and to give an input in budgets. They mentioned that mechanisms to involve residents were in place in Masvingo city and the views of the residents were taken into consideration. The Town Clerk posited that platforms such as meetings, social media, print media and consultations were used to ensure that the community participated in CG and service delivery issues in Masvingo city. The same sentiments were echoed by the municipal employees. The councillors and the municipal employees almost unanimously agreed that there was high community participation and that the city of Masvingo had empowered the community to actively identify and present their needs.

Table I.3: Residents’ views on Community Involvement and Service Delivery.

Statement on Community Involvement and Service Delivery	OPINION		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The community actively participates in making decisions concerning the running of the municipality and service delivery	7(13%)	19(34%)	29(52) %
The city of Masvingo leadership has actively empowered the community in identifying and presenting their needs	6 (11%)	20 (36%)	30(54%)

The city of Masvingo leadership has put in place avenues for residents’ groups to freely consult group members	11(20%)	19(34%)	26 (46%)
The community participates in monitoring service delivery by the city of Masvingo	7(13%)	14(25%)	35(63%)
Masvingo municipal employees frequently engage residents in service delivery issues.	10(18%)	14(25%)	32(57%)
The city of Masvingo has established ward committees that regulates the municipality on wastage of money and resources to keep down the costs of service delivery	8(14%)	19(34%)	29(52%)
Masvingo municipal employees urgently respond to residents’ service delivery queries.	10(18%)	21(38%)	25 (45%)
Masvingo municipal employees have good working relationship with the Masvingo residents.	12 (21%)	13(23%)	31(55%)

(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

The residents of Masvingo city expressed a gloomy picture regarding the level of their participation as the community in issues pertaining to service delivery in the city. According to Table 4.3, the level of community participation was generally rated as low since the majority of the residents disagreed with the given statements. For example, only 12% of the residents agreed with the statement that the community actively participates in making decisions concerning the running of the municipality and service delivery while 52% if the residents disagreed with the same statement. The view that the community participates in monitoring service delivery by the city of Masvingo was backed by only 13% of the residents with 63% of them disputing it. Only 12% of the residents believed that Masvingo municipal employees have good working relationship with the Masvingo residents while 55% of the same group of residents thought otherwise. It can therefore be remarked that the residents of Masvingo openly disagreed with the optimistic views expressed by the auditor, the Town Clerk and the municipal employees. As far as most residents were concerned, the community plays a very insignificant role in connection with CG and service delivery issues. The stance by the residents to demand more participation in municipality issues is consistent with the stakeholder theory which states that organisations such as municipalities must be sensitive to the needs of their communities and therefore should be accountable to the stakeholders (Sifile et al, 2018).

The municipality employees claimed that the residents of Masvingo city monitored service delivery. They also made the assertion that the employees regularly engaged the residents in connection with service delivery issues coupled with the view that municipal employees had good working relations with residents. Surprisingly, the councillors expressed some

reservations regarding the role of the community in connection with CG and service delivery. The councillors mostly gave noncommittal answers to the questionnaire items. It can be claimed that the findings of the current study were not very divorced from some previous studies regarding the issue of community participation in service delivery issues. According to Mwankupili and Msilu (2020) the issues of citizenship participation in public institutions has been on the decrease in recent years. They further highlighted that the community in local governance system has the opportunity to participate in direct and indirect democracy and governance. The results of the current study resonated with the recommendations given by Castrillón (2021) who argues that citizens need information to make good choices since information is a tool which the community uses to assess and determine if policy makers and service providers do their jobs, deliver quality services, and make effective use of public funds.

4.3 Impact of CG on the quality of service delivery

This section focused on the respondents’ sentiments regarding the impact of CG on the quality of service delivery. The five categories of research participants had a lot to say regarding the impact of CG on service delivery. All the municipal employees (100%) and all the councillors (100%) indicated that CG had a positive impact on the quality of service delivery. The residents of Masvingo city responded in a similar manner. Almost equal numbers of residents concluded that CG could influence service delivery either positively or negatively as illustrated in Table 4.4.

Table I.4: Residents’ views on the Impact of CG on the quality of Service Delivery.

Elements of CG Framework	Impact on the quality of Service Delivery			
	Positive	Negative	Positive and Negative	No Effect
Transparency	34%	38%	23%	5%
Accountability	38%	38%	21%	4%
Citizenship Participation	38%	30%	25%	9%
Rule of law	38%	32%	16%	14%
Honesty	36%	30%	29%	5%
Integrity	43%	38%	14%	5%
Fairness	39%	47%	21%	9%

(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

Very few residents suggested that CG has no effect on service delivery as confirmed by the subdued percentages in Table 4.4.

More precisely, Table 4.4 shows that only 5% of the residents believed that transparency, honesty and integrity as elements of CG have no effect on the quality of service delivery. This implies that 95% of the residents of Masvingo city subscribe to the idea that transparency, honesty and integrity as elements

of CG had an impact on the quality of service delivery. Merely 4% of the residents regarded accountability as having no effect on the quality of service delivery. This means 96% of the residents’ believed that CG issues pertaining to accountability impacted on the quality of service delivery positively and or negatively.

The auditor and the Town Clerk of Masvingo city both expressed the view that upholding the seven elements of CG could affect the quality of service delivery positively while failure to implement the elements of good CG would negatively impinge upon service delivery. More explicitly, the Town Clerk explained that a subdued or lack of rule of law derailed service delivery. In the absence of accountability, the residents would not be keen to pay their bills thereby limiting the number of financial resources at the disposal of the municipality. According to the Town Clerk, poor decisions made by the municipality employees and councillors had a chance of causing poor CG which would ultimately translate to poor service delivery. The auditor specifically indicated that failure to honour the already stated seven elements of CG would propagate feelings of mistrust especially between the residents and municipality offices. She indicated that such a setup would lead to poor service delivery.

The Masvingo City Town Clerk posited that high levels of transparency would promote high levels of confidence among the residents. This would lead to high levels of commitment to bill payment on the part of the residents. Such a scenario according to the Town clerk, would lead to improved service delivery. He also remarked that accountability and the provision of feedback to the relevant stakeholders would ultimately affect quality delivery positively.

The views of the research participants in their different categories almost unanimously concurred that CG has a bearing on the quality of service delivery. Challenges in the areas of transparency, accountability, citizenship participation, rule of law, integrity, honesty and fairness normally lead to poor service delivery while the upholding all of these CG elements promote quality service delivery.

The results of the current study were exactly like the outcomes of an allied study previously conducted by Sifile et al (2018) on the impact of CG on service delivery in Murewa Rural District Council in Zimbabwe. Just like the current study, the study by Sifile et al (2018) disclosed that CG has an impact on service delivery. Similar results were found in separate studies which were undertaken by Mbecke, Mwankupili and Msilu (2020) and Dube (2019). Similarly, a study by Abakose and Abagojam (2021) on the good governance practices and public service delivery in Jimma town in Ethiopia revealed that there are strong relationships between good governance practices and public basic service delivery. In the same vein, Eke et al (2018) carried out a study on the local government administration and good governance in Nigeria which revealed that good governance in the form of citizen participation,

accountability and transparency had a strong bearing on the quality of service delivery.

4.4 Challenges faced in promoting good CG

Tasked to identify challenges which hamper the operations of Masvingo municipality, the residents identified political interference, nepotism in the recruitment of employees, corruption and misuse of resources, lack of financial support, lack of a municipal code of governance and inconsistent selection criteria for councillors. Most of the Masvingo city residents suggested that the operations of a Masvingo city municipality were littered with some challenges. This is testified by the data in Table 4.5.

Table I.5: Residents’ views on the Challenges in the operations of Masvingo municipality.

Challenges in the operations of Masvingo municipality	RATING		
	Low	Moderate	High
Nepotism in recruitment and selection of employees	14%	34%	52%
Recruitment of incompetent staff without proper qualification	27%	52%	21%
Corruption and misuse of resources	16%	34%	50%
Lack of internal and external controls	16%	41%	43%
Political Interference and lack of proper communication strategy between politicians in municipalities with officials and communities	13%	34%	54%
Lack of municipality code of governance	21%	50%	46%
Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities.	21%	59%	20%
Lack of experience on the part of the Board members	23%	43%	13%
Lack of adequate financial support affect implementation of systems to improve CG for example funding for capacity building programs for board members.	16%	34%	50%
Inconsistent selection criteria of councillors	11%	48%	41%

(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

It can be seen from Table 4.5 that 52% of the residents of Masvingo identified nepotism in the recruitment and selection of employees while political interference was rated as a challenge by 54% of the residents. Corruption and misuse of resources together with lack of adequate financial support affect implementation of systems to improve CG for example funding for capacity building programs for board members were viewed by 50% of the residents who took part in the study as rampant and rife challenges. The recruitment of incompetent employees was viewed by only 13% of the 56 Masvingo city residents who took part in the study.

Table I.6: Municipal Employees and Councillors’ views on Challenges in the operations of Masvingo municipality

Challenges in the operations of Masvingo municipality	RATING					
	EMP	CO UN	E MP	C OU N	E MP	COU N
	Low		Moderate		High	
Nepotism in recruitment and selection of employees	3	1	2	0	2	4
Recruitment of incompetent staff without proper qualification	5	0	1	2	1	3
Corruption and misuse of resources	4	0	3	0	0	5
Lack of internal and external controls	5	0	1	2	1	3
Political Interference and lack of proper communication strategy between politicians in municipalities with officials and communities	1	0	4	2	2	2
Lack of municipality code of governance	5	0	2	2	0	3
Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities.	6	0	1	2	0	3
Lack of experience on the part of the Board members	3	0	0	3	4	2
Lack of adequate financial support affect implementation of systems to improve CG for example funding for capacity building programs for board members.	2	0	1	1	4	4
Inconsistent selection criteria of councillors	2	0	1	1	4	4

(Source: Research Survey Data, 2021)

Table 4.6 shows that the Masvingo city council employees and the councillors did not agree on the aspects which they rated as challenges inundating Masvingo municipality. All the Masvingo city councillors (100%) agreed that corruption and misuse of resources were serious challenges in Masvingo city. The issue of corruption was also found by Mujih (2021) whose study in the United Kingdom established that there was an increase in scandalous corruption cases in Oxfordshire County Council. Therefore, the views of residents regarding the challenges in the operations of Masvingo municipality were reiterated by the councillors. Four out of five councillors (80%) identified nepotism in recruitment and selection of employees, lack of adequate financial support in running municipality affairs and inconsistent selection criteria of councillors as serious challenges faced by the municipality of Masvingo. On the contrary, the employees of Masvingo

municipality claimed that the municipality did not have many challenges except lack of financial support, inconsistent selection criteria for councillors and lack of experience on the part of the board members. At least 5 out of the 7 (71%) of Masvingo municipality employees indicated that Masvingo city municipality did not face the recruitment of incompetent staff without proper qualification, poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities and lack of municipality code of governance as challenges.

The auditor identified several challenges derailing the operations of Masvingo municipality. She indicated that Masvingo municipality was affected by challenges such as unfair decision making due to lack of integrity, political interference, nepotism in the recruitment of employees and corruption which seemed to be cascading from bigger national structures. The Town Clerk identified challenges which significantly tallied with the ones mentioned by the auditor. According to the Town Clerk, Masvingo municipality was grappling with challenges such as nepotism, political interference and lack of resources, a challenge which made it difficult for the municipality to achieve its mandate to distribute resources fairly. The Town Clerk further, made reference to challenges such as unnecessary bureaucracy and the regular amendment of bylaws and acts of parliament. Corruption was also mentioned by the Town Clerk, and he hinted that corruption seemed to be part of a grand system in Zimbabwe.

The challenges faced by the municipality of Masvingo were to a large extent also noted in a study conducted by Dube (2019). Moreover, Abakose & Abagojam (2021) indicated that public service delivery in many African countries is riddled with bureaucracy, corruption, selfishness, and favouritism that tend to benefit the privileged few at the expense of the impoverished many. According to Abakose & Abagojam (2021) many municipalities in Ethiopia face various public service delivery challenges including public money wastage, low revenue collections and unmotivated public servants, poor accountability, and generally poor performance on service. Therefore, the situation in Masvingo city is not peculiar.

4.5 Measures to improve CG

Several measures to improve CG were given by the research participants. The auditor suggested that the current crop of Masvingo municipality employees be trained to revamp their professional competence. She also pointed out that mechanisms needed to be instituted to encourage the residents of Masvingo to timeously pay their municipality bills so as to enable the municipality to undertake quality service delivery. The Town Clerk agreed with the sentiments of the auditor in this regard. The Town Clerk further proposed that a culture of citizenship participation needs to be propagated in Masvingo city. According to the Town Clerk, there is need to adopt a coordinated and holistic approach in the fight against two bad practices, namely corruption and nepotism. Over and above other suggestions, the Town Clerk proposed that the challenge

of erratic water supply could be addressed through the mandatory drilling of boreholes in residential and industrial areas.

The employees, councillors and the residents agreed that staff development was needed to improve professionalism, integrity, transparency and fairness on the part of the municipality employees in Masvingo city. They also suggested that the service charter be reviewed in line with the prevailing societal circumstances. The need for rapport between residents and the municipality was also underscored. Municipality employees suggested that the city council needed to regularly publish its success stories as a way of enhancing transparency.

During the empirical investigation, the Masvingo municipality councillors suggested that the challenges encountered in the operations of the municipality could be alleviated by increasing the level of engagement between politicians, councillors, managers and stakeholders' representatives. The councillors also recommended that the residents be given more information through print, public relations statements, press statements and social media. The residents remarked that CG would never be in place unless vices such as corruption, nepotism and political interference were whittled down or even eradicated. The need for regular engagement between the municipality and the citizens was also recommended by the residents of Masvingo who took part in the current study. Some residents suggested that there is need to introduce an external board for monitoring and evaluating the operations of Masvingo municipality to ascertain if CG was being upheld with the intention of promoting quality service delivery.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Research Summary

The section below presents the summary of the research in relation to the objectives of the study.

5.1.1 CG framework employed by the city of Masvingo

Based on the data, which was gathered from councillors, municipality employees, the residents of Masvingo city, the auditor and the Town Clerk during the empirical investigation, it emerged that their views regarding the existence of a CG framework in Masvingo city were to some extent contradictory. The councillors, the auditor, the Town Clerk and the employees reported that some elements of CG were being implemented by Masvingo municipality while the residents blatantly disputed this.

5.1.2 The Role of the Community in Connection with CG and Service Delivery

The research revealed that the role of the community in connection with CG and service delivery is to monitor quality service delivery and to hold the city of Masvingo accountable, to identify areas that need improvement in terms of service delivery and to be part of the decision making in terms of

preparing budgets. The residents painted a pessimistic picture while the respondents in the other categories claimed that the community was actively involved.

5.1.3 Impact of CG on the quality of service delivery

The results confirmed that CG can impact on service delivery both positively and negatively. Failure to uphold the seven elements of CG was reported to have a negative impact on the quality of service delivery. On the other hand, putting effort to ensure that the seven elements of CG were in place was found to have a positive impact on service delivery. These were the sentiments of the five categories of the respondents. The Town Clerk of Masvingo city elaborated these permutations in more detail.

5.1.4 Challenges faced in promoting good CG

In terms of the challenges faced by the city of Masvingo in promoting good CG, the research findings established that political interference, nepotism in the recruitment and selection of employees, corruption and misuse of resources, lack of financial support, lack of a municipal code of governance and inconsistent selection criteria for councillors were ranked high. These were regarded as the major challenges hindering the local authority in promoting good CG.

5.1.5 Measures to improve CG and enhanced quality service delivery

Masvingo municipality needs to employ various mitigatory measures to promote good CG and improve quality of service delivery. These measures include curbing corruption, nepotism and political interference. It was suggested that regular engagement between the residents and the municipality together with retraining and work-shopping the current crop of employees could go a long way towards improving CG and the quality of service delivery.

5.2 Conclusions

From the findings the researchers conclude that:

- The city of Masvingo must have a well-defined CG framework. All the principles of good CG that include rule of law, citizen participation, honesty, integrity and transparency must be properly spelt out and well implemented, as well as being effectively communicated to all the stakeholders involved.
- Poor communication and failure to properly engage the citizens resulted in low citizen participation hence affecting quality of service delivery. Masvingo residents were not informed of the current developments going on at their local municipality. Clearly spelt out roles on the side of the residents improves citizen participation.
- CG has a positive and a negative impact on the quality of service delivery. Upholding and implementing all the principles of CG positively impacts quality of service delivery. Failure to

implement the principles of CG negatively affects quality of service delivery.

- Masvingo city need to employ various mitigatory measures to improve CG and quality of service delivery since the current measures have not achieved much. These measures include but not limited to curbing corruption, political interference, nepotism and misuse of resources. Promoting regular engagement of the residents and retraining of the current crop of employees. Also employing an all stakeholder approach is relevant.

5.3 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations generated basing on the data collected from research participants:

- The municipality of Masvingo should consider introducing a Public Relations wing which is responsible for facilitating the interaction between the residents and the municipality. As already pointed out, high levels of interaction between the residents and the municipality can enhance commitment to bill payment, a development which can enable the municipality to uphold the elements of CG. The Public Relations arm would attempt to put a framework for an all-stakeholder approach in which all the elements of CG are considered for the sake of improving the quality of service delivery in Masvingo city.
- Mechanisms need to be instituted to curb nepotism and corruption in the operations of Masvingo municipality. Seeking the assistance of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and engaging the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption commission can make a positive difference.
- The municipality of Masvingo must be deliberate in making sure that the elements of CG such as transparency, accountability, fairness, integrity and honesty are observed to ultimately promote high quality service delivery.
- There is need for government to introduce a CG framework meant for local municipalities only, this will go a long way in improving CG and promoting quality of service delivery in local municipalities.
- Management of Councils should ensure that all information concerning council programs is at the disposal of all stakeholders and be in a format that is understandable by the people who would be involved in the implementation process.

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